Chairman's Report

SID initiatives focus on clean and safe, marketing and events, and stakeholder services with an emphasis on business development. Occupancy within the SID is at 75.4% according to CBRE data reports. Average leasing rates within the SID continue to rise (up from $15.96 to the current $16.29) while suburban leasing rates dropped from $14.74 to $14.51 per sq. ft. Newly grant-funded initiatives to develop downtown Akron as a live-work-play area continue to gain momentum.*
*Sources: DAP, CB Richard Ellis

President's Report

Downtown Akron is the center of a city on the move.

The past 12 months have been transformational for the Downtown district. Transitions in civic leadership, infrastructure investments, recognition from national philanthropy and an emerging shared vision have served as much-needed catalysts to kick start a new season of revitalization in our Downtown.

We are grateful for the support of Mayor Horrigan and his cabinet as we enter into the next year of the DASID. His encouragement and open-minded, collaborative spirit have admirably set the tone for increased community participation in building the city. Support from municipal offices is critically important to the health of the district and we are honored to be considered a partner in the progress of Akron.

Over the next five years, more than $147.5 million dollars will be invested in the urban core through infrastructure improvements. These improvements will reshape the Downtown experience – converting one way streets to two way, improving our water quality, creating more walkable, cycle friendly areas for business growth and improving the quality of our public space. DAP is committed to assisting in the design and communication of these projects in order to yield the best possible results for our stakeholders.

In 2016, Akron was selected as one of five cities including to participate in the Reimagining the Civic Commons project – a national initiative that supports place-based efforts to create change through the strengthening of civic assets. DAP was proud to serve as one of five organizations who championed the effort to secure our selection with Downtown providing the northern end to a string of assets through to Summit Lake via the Towpath Trail. In our next fiscal year, we will focus on drawing inspiration from a national learning network as well as testing a number of tactical initiatives to learn what works best for us in Akron.

As promised, DAP's resolve to focus on our economic health and stability has made significant strides in bettering the neighborhood. In 2015, we embarked on the development of a long range plan for the first time in DAP's history. From the beginning, the plan was supported by Mayor Horrigan, whose Blue Ribbon Task Force saw the need for such a plan, which was also a primary recommendation from DAP's strategic planning process last year. DAP contracted with nationally-recognized consultants MKSK of Columbus to lead the first phase of the Downtown Vision and Redevelopment Plan, which is supported by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and GAR Foundation. The 2016-2017 fiscal year will bring opportunity to continue the planning process, to develop design guidelines, financing tools and policy to shape the future of Downtown.

As always, we are honored to be a part of making Downtown Akron's future.

Physical Environment

• DAP Clean & Safe ambassadors canvas the 42-block SID district, keeping sidewalks clean and welcoming and assisting visitors. Litter cleanup and special projects (power washing of sidewalks, weed abatement, graffiti removal and bus shelter cleaning) maintain Downtown's clean and inviting physical appearance. All DAP ambassadors are trained in hospitality assistance services, CPR and certified in Homeland Security training.
• DAP advocates for Downtown property owners on a variety of issues at meetings of the Downtown Operations Group.
• Over 450 neighborhood volunteers gave downtown a deep cleaning over five Friday's in April and May as part of the 9th Annual Green and Clean. The NIHF STEM Middle School's 5th and 6th grade students completed service projects along the towpath and around the Summit County Courthouse in the morning, followed by educational experiences in the afternoon.
• DAP, with help from the Corbin Foundation, continues to bring vibrancy to Downtown. Beautification efforts throughout the SID footprint transform the 42-block district into a walkable, inviting destination with hanging baskets (54), planter boxes (57), and nearly 80 sidewalk planters, half of which were adopted by Downtown businesses. Ambassadors watered the flowers and greenery daily throughout the growing season. DAP continues to fund Keep Akron Beautiful's Downtown floralscapes.
• As participants in the Active Transportation and iTowpath Committee, DAP assisted a grant-funded project lead by Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition to establish a separated cycle track on South Main Street. Ambassadors planted and maintained an additional 51 planters that serve as barriers between the cycle track and the vehicular parking lane along the route. This is just one initiative dedicated to improving the downtown experience by developing the district as a destination for cyclists and visitors through our connection to the Towpath Trail and Cuyahoga Valley National Park.
• In 2015, the city collected 79.29 tons of recyclables from 25 business locations through the Downtown Commercial Recycling program, up from 23 in 2014.

Safety & Parking

• DAP's Clean & Safe Ambassadors patrol the SID District and the METRO Transit Center at Broadway and Bartges. METRO continues to heavily support the ambassador program in exchange for services at Downtown bus stops and the Transit Center. DAP also promotes and supports the new DASH downtown circulator provided by METRO.
• Uniformed ambassadors provide a recognizable physical presence and work with street level businesses to address security concerns. Hospitality services such as safety escorts, battery jumps, lockout and fuel emergency assistance to aid stranded motorists, have increased in use and are highly valued by Downtown spenders.
• DAP's email alert system keeps individuals and businesses Downtown apprised of traffic disruptions and emergency situations.
• DAP funds the APD nighttime shift supervisor Thursday through Saturday in the Main and Exchange area and has collaborated with APD to add additional officers through grant initiatives.
• DAP updates and distributes its brochures on the Clean & Safe Ambassador Program, car safety, and office and building security, as well as its parking/skywalk map and Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail map through Downtown.

Marketing & Promotion

• Over 1,000 of the current passports have been sold since November 2015. The Downtown destination-branding initiative, offers 17 events throughout the year, beginning with First Night Akron.
• Approximately 13,500 revelers helped celebrate the 20th Annual First Night Akron – Northeast Ohio's largest family-friendly New Year's Eve celebration of the arts that activates Downtown spaces, creates opportunity for local musicians to reach new audiences and enriches our community as we celebrate our city.
• More than 200 visual artists competed in the 5th Annual Akron Art Prize. DAP partnered with Margaret Clark Morgan Foundation, Burton D. Morgan Foundation and Summit Artspace to host the competition that awards cash prizes totalling $16,000. Added this year were four juried awards as well as two- and three-dimensional categories in the publicly-determined categories. As a Knight Arts Challenge award recipient, DAP looks to expand Art Prize in 2017 to include music, film and other art disciplines.
• Summer on the Plaza gave downtown workers the opportunity to get out of their offices and enjoy the plaza. Colorful Adirondack chairs were added to provide comfortable seating options.
• DAP's new logo was designed by Agency Without Walls, a group of local marketing professionals. WhiteSpace Creative was awarded the contract to further the work started by this group. A new responsive website design is in the works and is scheduled to launch this month. Studio Graphique was contracted to further develop the logo strategy and brand of Downtown Akron and DAP. A redesign of the Towpath map will serve as a template for the redesign of remaining collateral pieces.
• DAP has 16,278 active email contacts in Constant Contact who receive Do Downtown, Downtown Partners, safety and traffic advisories, media releases and other messages.
• DAP's social media following includes the following: Facebook – 4,698; Facebook (First Night) – 1,153; Facebook (Akron Art Prize) – 1,164; Twitter – 6,925 and Instagram – 2,079
• DAP worked for the 3rd year with akronlife magazine to produce a Downtown Akron magazine published in the June 2016 issue. The section was well supported by area businesses for advertising and DAP helped develop the content that focused on new businesses, resident profiles, Artwalk and other downtown activities and attractions. An over run of 10,000 copies were distributed to Downtown businesses, venues and residents, the Akron Canton Airport, Akron Zoo and area hotels.
• DAP supported three co-op advertising packages through the Greater Akron Chamber's Experience Greater Akron, Akron/Summit CVB Visitor Guide and Akronlife's Downtown Akron guide, allowing small and independent businesses to take part in a larger downtown campaign at a low cost, with DAP underwriting the majority of the expense.
• Kiss My Akron window cling campaign returned in February for the fourth year. DAP Emerging Leaders coordinated a social media campaign to encourage participation.
• DAP continues to manage and grow Akronstock, an open source website of free photos of Downtown Akron and surrounding areas. Photographers include Shane Wynn, Studio KMR, Tim Fitzwater and Shoo.in.
• DAP continues to promote, host and/or partner with other area events and destinations including the Downtown Akron Artwalk, Cleveland International Film Festival, Bridgestone Invitational, University of Akron athletics, Akron Marathon and Winter Fest.
• DAP continues to provide programs to encourage healthy lifestyles. More than 2,400 people attended the Market at Lock 3 and 400 joined the SummaCare sponsored Everyday Health program that included weekly walking and building tours throughout the summer.

• DAP distributed its first Quarterly update in September as a resource for new and existing businesses in the district.

Stakeholder Services

• In 2016, DAP convened the Downtown Vision and Redevelopment Planning Process in conjunction with the City of Akron. The process is the first of its kind for DAP and demonstrates our dedication to strategic planning to improve Downtown.
• DAP convenes quarterly meetings in each of the three downtown districts to improve communication, share construction updates, discuss concerns and better understand and respond to the needs of the district.
• With an investment of $26,500, DAP helped to position Downtown properties to gain $221,250 in lease revenue over the terms of the leases signed, and 28 employees were brought into the district. These additions were made through the Pop Up Retail Program supported by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.
• DAP welcomes new businesses and visit existing businesses for stakeholder interviews and pop-ins to relay information and gather feedback. More than 1500 outreach packets were delivered to incoming, potential and existing businesses; staff made contact with 35 prospective tenants, visited 200 current businesses through visits, surveys and pop-ins, and 80 current retailers received quarterly retail visits.
• DAP has secured grant support from GAR Foundation and Burton D. Morgan Foundation to hire a full time Director of Business Development to work exclusively on small business cultivation and tenant attraction and retention.
• DAP Emerging Leaders are 15 young professionals committed to engaging their demographic in projects that include #LovetheWall and Downtown Restaurant Tour.
• DAP provides welcome packets to new residents in the neighborhood. In 2015, more than 1,400 packets were distributed to our new Downtown neighbors in Quaker Square, Canal Square, 401 Lofts, 22 Exchange, 401 Lofts and The Depot.
• DAP convenes the monthly Public Market group, whose interests include bringing a public market and commercial kitchen to Akron. A visit to the Eastern Market and Rust Belt Market in Detroit In February was supported by the John S. & James L. Knight Foundation.
• DAP's themed animated displays will again fill the windows of Polsky and O'Neil's with holiday cheer. The Landmark Building windows will also display parts of the collection, some of which date back to the '60s and '70s.
• DAP benchmarks Downtown perceptions on a variety of ongoing issues through a comprehensive online Annual Downtown Akron Survey and gains perspectives for new and potential projects. The 2016 survey is now in progress.

Downtown Akron Special Improvement District, Inc. BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2015-2016

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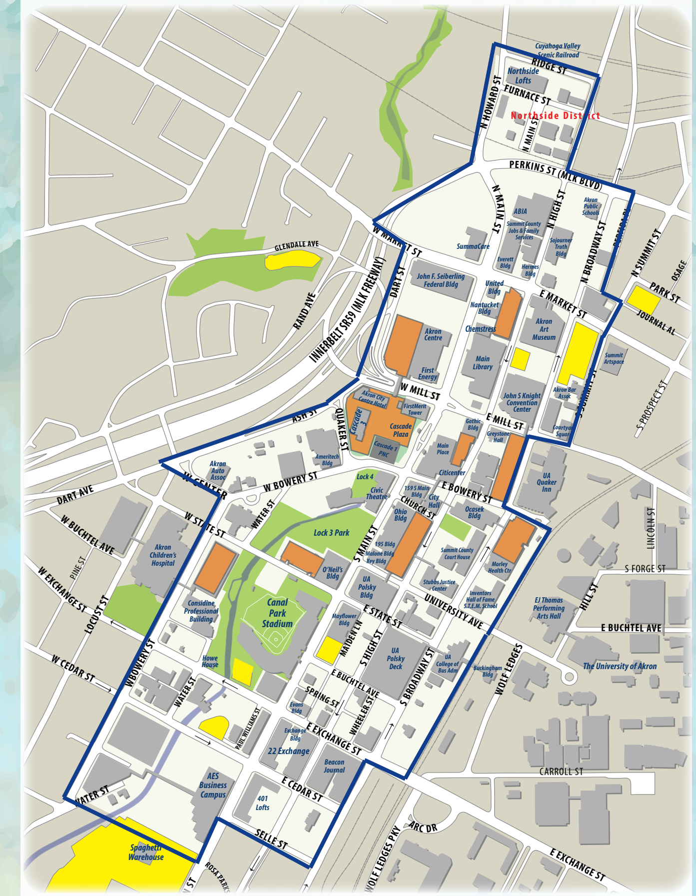
Marilyn Keith
President, Akron City Council

Suzie Graham, *President*
Downtown Akron Partnership
sgraham@downtownakron.com

Downtown Akron
Special Improvement District, Inc.
Fiscal Year ended 6/30/2016
Statement of Activities - Cash Basis

Public Support and Revenue:		
SID Assessment	$643,432	
Interest Income	30	
Total public support & revenues		$643,462
Expenses:		
Management Contract to DAP	$626,000	
Insurance	2,338	
Accounting	4,609	
Bank charges	76	
Legal	171	
Total Expenses		633,194
Revenues Over Expenses		10,268
Net Assets Beginning of Year		6,323
Net Assets at End of Year		16,591

Downtown Akron Special Improvement District, Inc.

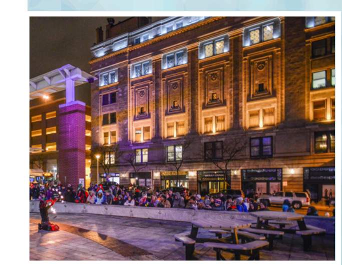
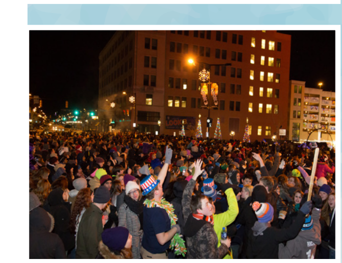


Downtown Akron Partnership
www.downtownakron.com

Greystone Hall • 103 S High St, 4th floor • Akron OH 44308
330-374-7676 (phone) • 330-374-7620 (fax)
Ambassador Assistance 330-706-7383

Ambassador Statistics
July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

Trash Removed - 39,265 lbs
Flower Watering - 51,021 gallons
Graffiti Removed - 872 tags
Hospitality Assists - 11,643 assists
Bus Shelters Cleaned - 3,772 shelters
METRO Related Assists - 310 assists
Blocks Power Washed - 907 blocks
Power Wasing Gallons - 27,208 gallons
Power Washing Hours - 8,522 hours
Pounds of Trash Collected - 37,877 lbs
Blocks Weeded - 232 blocks
Parking Related Assists - 4,984 assists
Motorist Assistance - 286 assists
Bicycle Miles - 515 miles
Business Contacts - 2,308 contacts
Safety Escorts - 112

DOWNTOWN AKRON
SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT, INC.

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